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\$125,000 grant from U.S. SBA awarded through the Illinois DCEO to the **Illinois SBDC at Rogers Park Business Alliance for new program to assist underserved businesses, including those in diverse and multilingual communities**

CHICAGO (August 13, 2020)—The **Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Rogers Park Business Alliance** is excited to launch the **Business Accessibility Toolkit (BAT)**, a new program to assist underserved businesses, including those in diverse and multilingual communities, woman- and veteran-owned businesses, and other populations that have been historically excluded from traditional business resources. The BAT program is funded by a \$125,000 grant from the state of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, originating from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Managed by Illinois SBDC staff at the nonprofit Rogers Park Business Alliance, BAT's team of consultants, coaches and interpreters will break down the barriers that block access to traditional business resources by providing no-cost, personalized and expert assistance to small businesses, with a focus on diverse and underserved business owners in low- to moderate-income communities on the north side of Chicago. Fluency in English is not a requirement to participate in the BAT program; services will be offered to businesses in multiple languages, including Spanish and others on an as-determined basis.

"The pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of Chicago's small businesses as never before, especially businesses within diverse communities," said Sandi Price, executive director of Rogers Park Business Alliance. "We are launching the new Business Accessibility Toolkit in response, working with business consultants and community partners to bring resources in multiple languages directly to small businesses in need."

Resources provided by the **Business Accessibility Toolkit** will focus on the following key business areas: capital access and financial literacy; technology access, cybersecurity and web integration; legal requirements; health and safety workplace protection and regulation compliance; disaster preparedness; and public relations, marketing and social media. Business consultants confirmed for BAT include: Chicago Info Tech (Technology/Cybersecurity), the Law Offices of Hector Morales (Legal) and The Silverman Group, Inc. (PR/Marketing).

For more information on the Business Accessibility Toolkit program at the Illinois SBDC at Rogers Park Business Alliance, visit [RPBA.org/business-accessibility-toolkit](https://rpba.org/business-accessibility-toolkit) or call 773-508-5885.

About the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Rogers Park Business Alliance

Through the support of the U. S. Small Business Administration and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois SBDC at Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA) opened for business in January 2020. It is part of a nationwide network of centers that promote entrepreneurship, small business growth and the U.S. economy through no-cost,

confidential advising for established small businesses and entrepreneurs. RPBA received an \$80,000 grant to open an Illinois SBDC at its organization.

About Rogers Park Business Alliance

Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA) is a nonprofit organization that has served Chicago's diverse Rogers Park neighborhood for more than 25 years. RPBA works to cultivate and sustain a thriving economic environment in Rogers Park, serving businesses and residents with a variety of public events and business initiatives. RPBA programs include the GROW/PROGRESANDO entrepreneurial training program, annual Best of Rogers Park awards, Taste of Clark Street and Chalk Howard Street festivals, and the Glenwood Sunday Market farmers market. For more information, visit RPBA.org.

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